Catalogue no. 85F0033M — No. 18
ISSN 1496-4562
ISBN 978-1-100-11161-2

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series

Immigrants and Victimization, 2004

by Samuel Perreault

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
19th floor, R.H. Coats Building, Ottawa, K1A 0T6

Telephone: 613-951-9023 Toll-free: 1-800-387-2231

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

Specific inquiries about this product and related statistics or services should be directed to: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6 (Toll-free 1-800-387-2231, telephone: 613-951-9023, fax: 613-951-6615).

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website at www.statcan.gc.ca, e-mail us at infostats@statcan.gc.ca, or telephone us, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

Statistics Canada's National Contact Centre

Toll-free telephone (Canada and United States):

Inquiries line	1-800-263-1136
National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired	1-800-363-7629
Fax line	1-877-287-4369

Local or international calls:

Inquiries line	1-613-951-8116
Fax line	1-613-951-0581

Depository Services Program

Inquiries line	1-800-635-7943
Fax line	1-800-565-7757

To access this product

This product, Catalogue no. 85F0033M, is available free in electronic format. To obtain a single issue, visit our website at www.statcan.gc.ca and select "Publications" > "Free Internet publications."

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under "About us" > "Providing services to Canadians."

Statistics Canada
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics

Immigrants and Victimization, 2004

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2008

All rights reserved. The content of this electronic publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, and by any means, without further permission from Statistics Canada, subject to the following conditions: that it be done solely for the purposes of private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary, and/or for non-commercial purposes; and that Statistics Canada be fully acknowledged as follows: Source (or "Adapted from", if appropriate): Statistics Canada, year of publication, name of product, catalogue number, volume and issue numbers, reference period and page(s). Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, by any means—electronic, mechanical or photocopy—or for any purposes without prior written permission of Licensing Services, Client Services Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

December 2008

Catalogue no. 85F0033M, no. 18

ISSN 1496-4562
ISBN 978-1-100-11161-2

Frequency: Occasional

Ottawa

Cette publication est disponible en français sur demande (n° 85F0033M au catalogue).

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued cooperation and goodwill.

Preface

This series of profiles provides analysis on a variety of topics and issues concerning victimization, offending and public perceptions of crime and the justice system. The profiles primarily draw on results from the General Social Survey on victimization. Where applicable, they also incorporate information from other data sources, such as the Census of Population and the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Examples of the topics explored through this series include: Victimization and offending in Canada's territories, Canadians' use of crime prevention measures and Victimization of older Canadians. This is a unique periodical, of great interest to those who plan, establish, administer and evaluate justice programs and projects, or anyone who has an interest in Canada's justice system.

Table of contents

Highlights 6
Introduction 7
Portrait of immigrants in Canada 7
Immigrants as victims of violent crime 11
Immigrants' perceptions of the criminal justice system 12
Immigrants' perceptions of social disorder and discrimination 14
Immigrants' perceptions regarding their personal safety and fear of crime 14
Summary 15
Methodology 16
Bibliography 17
Endnotes 17
Cumulative Index 18

Highlights

- Similar to what was observed in 1999, data from the 2004 General Social Survey showed that immigrants had a lower rate of violent crime victimization (68 incidents per 1,000 population) than that of the Canadian-born population (116 incidents per 1,000 population).

- Second-generation Canadians — individuals born in Canada but with at least one parent born abroad — had a victimization rate comparable to third- or higher generation Canadians (125 incidents per 1,000 population).

- While violent victimization rates are lower for immigrants than for non-immigrants, the characteristics of the crimes against immigrants are quite similar to those of crimes committed against the Canadian-born population.

- Generally, similar proportions of both immigrants and non-immigrants feel that the police are doing a good job. However, those who had contact with the police during the 12 months preceding the survey had slightly less favourable evaluations, especially with respect to ensuring the safety of citizens and treating people fairly.

- Immigrants settle mainly in urban areas where social problems such as loitering, vandalism and the presence of drugs are more prevalent. However, immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to feel that these situations were a problem in their particular neighbourhood.

- Nearly 1 in 5 immigrants, compared to more than 1 in 10 among the Canadian-born population, reported experiencing discrimination during the five years preceding the survey. Immigrants who had lived in Canada less than five years were more likely than immigrants who lived in Canada more than 5 years to feel that they had been discriminated against (26% compared to 18%, respectively).

- Immigrants express slightly higher levels of fear of crime than the Canadian-born population, with 11% compared to 8% of non-immigrants, believing that the crime rate was higher in their neighbourhood than elsewhere in Canada.

- In Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, immigrants generally expressed lower levels of fear. Whereas in Ontario and British Columbia, they expressed higher levels of fear than non-immigrants. More than 60% of immigrants residing in Quebec and 65% of those residing in the Atlantic Provinces said that they felt safe when using public transportation alone after dark, compared to 52% in Ontario and 50% in British Columbia.

Introduction

In 2001, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics first released data on the victimization of immigrants from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization. The findings showed that immigrants had lower victimization rates than non-immigrant Canadians.

Since the 2001 Census, the representation of immigrants in the Canadian population increased from 18% to 20% five years later. Given this increased representation and the specific characteristics of the immigrant population in Canada, having current data on the nature and extent of victimization among immigrants is important.

Following the 1999 GSS on Victimization, the survey was conducted again in 2004. This report uses data from both the 2004 GSS and the 2006 Census to analyse the rates and characteristics of violent crimes against immigrants. Additionally, this profile includes information on immigrants' perceptions of their safety and of the justice system. Also, when the sample size permits, some provincial data are presented.

Portrait of immigrants in Canada[1]

In 2006, immigrants accounted for 20% of the Canadian population, a 14% increase compared to the 2001 Census (Chui, Tran and Maheux 2007). In the Canadian population aged 15 and older, their representation increased to 23%. This difference is mainly attributable to a growth in the proportion of immigrants aged 45 and older. Among recent immigrants, the situation is reversed, with more than three quarters (79%) less than 45 years of age.

Immigrants tend to live in urban areas.[2] Approximately 95% of immigrants live in either a census metropolitan area or a census agglomeration, compared to just over 75% of non-immigrants.

Recent immigrants come primarily from Asia (58%), Europe (16%), South or Central America or the Caribbean (11%) and Africa (11%). By comparison, in 1971, Europeans accounted for 62% of recent immigrants, whereas Asians accounted for 12% (Chui, Tran and Maheux 2007).

The unemployment rate of recent immigrants was almost double that of the non-immigrant population and their average income was considerably lower than that of the Canadian-born population ($20,999 versus $36,243, respectively) (Table 1.a). Recent immigrants between the ages of 25 and 54 had more difficulties in the labour market than non-immigrants in 2006 (Gilmore, 2008). However, these gaps narrowed over time; unemployment rates and average incomes among immigrants who have been in Canada for a longer period caught-up with those of their non-immigrant counterparts.

Text box 1
Definitions

Immigrant: The definition of immigrant used in this profile varies depending on the data source. In the section using Census of Population data, immigrants are defined as persons who, at the time of the 2006 Census, either held or had once held landed immigrant status, regardless of whether they were currently Canadian citizens. In the section using data from the 2004 General Social Survey (GSS), immigrants are defined as persons who were not born in Canada and who were not Canadian citizens by birth and who settled permanently in Canada in 2004 or earlier.

Recent immigrant: Recent immigrants are those who settled in Canada less than five years ago. According to data from the 2006 Census, recent immigrants are those who came to Canada between 2001 and 2006, while the GSS defines recent immigrants as those who came to Canada between 1999 and 2004.

Non-immigrant: In this profile, non-immigrants are defined as Canadian-born or immigrants of third or higher generation.

Second generation immigrant: Individuals who were born in Canada but with at least one parent born abroad.

Table 1.a
Selected characteristics of immigrants, recent immigrants and non-immigrants, population aged 15 and older, 2006

	Total Canadian population[1]	Total immigrants	Recent immigrants	Non-immigrants
		number		
Total population aged 15 and older	**25,664,220**	**5,841,245**	**886,790**	**19,592,380**
		percentage		
Percent of the Canadian population	100.0	22.8	3.5	76.3
Percent of the population by age group				
15 to 24	16.4	9.4	18.9	18.3
25 to 34	15.5	13.4	31.1	15.9
35 to 44	18.7	20.4	28.6	18.1
45 to 54	19.3	19.2	12.1	19.4
55 to 64	14.2	16.7	5.1	13.6
65 years and older	15.9	20.8	4.2	14.6
Percent with Canadian citizenship[2]	94.0	77.7	18.2	100.0
Percent of the population in a visible minority[3]	15.3	53.3	75.2	3.3
Percent of the population by marital status				
Single (never married)	34.8	20.1	27.0	39.2
Legally married and not separated	48.4	63.2	65.0	44.0
Separated but still legally married	3.0	3.1	2.5	3.0
Divorced	8.1	6.6	3.2	8.5
Widowed	5.7	7.0	2.4	5.3
Percent with university diploma	18.1	25.4	41.9	15.8
Percent with less than high school diploma	23.8	21.3	16.4	24.6
Percent by knowledge of official languages				
English only	67.2	77.7	72.7	63.9
French only	12.3	3.5	5.3	15.1
Both English and French	18.9	12.3	12.2	20.9
Neither English nor French	1.6	6.5	9.9	0.1
		dollars		
Average income (in dollars)[4]	35,498	33,444	20,999	36,243
		rate		
Unemployment rate	6.6	6.9	12.3	6.4

1. Includes non-permanent residents.
2. To be eligible for Canadian citizenship, immigrants must have at least three years of residency in Canada.
3. Statistics Canada defines visible minority status by using the criteria set out in the *Employment Equity Act*. According to that *Act*, "Members of visible minorities are persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are not white in race or colour."
4. Includes only persons with employment income in 2005.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census.

Table 1.b
Selected characteristics of the immigrant population aged 15 and older, by province, 2006

	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.
			number		
Total population aged 15 and older	**7,795**	**4,510**	**42,885**	**24,605**	**790,950**
			percentage		
Percent change from 2001 to 2006	2.6	13.9	9.9	15.3	20.0
Percent of the provincial population aged 15 and older	1.8	4.1	5.7	4.1	12.8
Percent of the population by age group					
15 to 24	6.2	4.8	7.7	7.1	9.3
25 to 34	8.7	8.0	9.4	10.2	16.8
35 to 44	16.7	19.5	16.9	20.3	21.7
45 to 54	21.9	17.2	18.4	17.6	18.0
55 to 64	23.5	21.0	21.8	18.9	15.3
65 years and older	23.0	29.7	25.8	25.8	18.9
Percent of the population by year of immigration					
Before 1991	69.1	73.9	70.7	73.4	55.5
1991 to 2000	16.9	11.9	17.0	13.9	25.0
2001 to 2006	13.9	14.2	12.4	12.7	19.5
Percent with Canadian citizenship	71.6	66.2	75.6	69.7	75.2
Percent of the population in a visible minority	30.1	15.3	25.2	20.8	49.1
Percent of the population by marital status					
Single (never married)	16.9	14.2	17.3	17.2	24.7
Legally married and not separated	64.6	65.7	63.2	64.0	57.5
Separated but still legally married	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0
Divorced	7.4	7.3	7.8	7.0	8.6
Widowed	8.5	9.8	8.7	8.7	6.2
Percent with university diploma	41.2	26.7	34.6	26.1	27.0
Percent with less than high school diploma	11.6	14.1	13.1	17.3	23.3
Percent by knowledge of official languages					
English only	84.9	89.9	86.1	72.7	18.5
French only	0.2	0.0	0.1	1.8	24.7
Both English and French	13.3	9.8	12.6	24.4	51.8
Neither English nor French	1.7	0.3	1.2	1.1	5.0
			dollars		
Average income (in dollars)[1]	48,423	28,418	36,211	32,607	28,387
			rate		
Unemployment rate	9.5	9.3	7.3	7.8	10.9

Table 1.b
Selected characteristics of the immigrant population aged 15 and older, by province, 2006 (continued)

	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.
			number		
Total population aged 15 and older	**3,217,525**	**140,105**	**45,255**	**495,100**	**1,066,595**
			percentage		
Percent change from 2001 to 2006	12.8	10.7	-0.6	19.0	11.8
Percent of the provincial population aged 15 and older	32.8	15.4	5.9	18.9	31.4
Percent of the population by age group					
15 to 24	9.6	9.5	8.5	9.0	9.3
25 to 34	13.0	12.8	10.8	15.0	12.1
35 to 44	20.5	19.1	16.7	21.0	19.3
45 to 54	19.4	18.9	17.9	19.9	19.6
55 to 64	16.7	17.5	17.8	16.3	17.6
65 years and older	20.9	22.3	28.4	18.9	22.1
Percent of the population by year of immigration					
Before 1991	58.6	66.0	67.7	59.7	56.8
1991 to 2000	27.0	17.5	19.1	23.9	29.5
2001 to 2006	14.5	16.4	13.3	16.5	13.7
Percent with Canadian citizenship	78.8	76.0	77.0	75.2	78.1
Percent of the population in a visible minority	53.5	43.8	39.6	53.8	59.6
Percent of the population by marital status					
Single (never married)	19.7	18.7	17.8	18.6	19.3
Legally married and not separated	63.9	64.5	63.1	65.6	64.2
Separated but still legally married	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8
Divorced	6.2	5.7	5.5	6.4	6.7
Widowed	7.0	8.4	10.9	6.6	7.0
Percent with university diploma	25.0	19.7	25.8	25.7	25.5
Percent with less than high school diploma	21.6	26.3	23.1	21.4	18.9
Percent by knowledge of official languages					
English only	87.1	91.5	91.8	89.0	85.2
French only	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Both English and French	6.3	4.1	5.8	5.2	5.4
Neither English nor French	6.4	4.2	2.4	5.7	9.4
			dollars		
Average income (in dollars)[1]	34,710	30,971	35,564	38,377	31,023
			rate		
Unemployment rate	6.8	4.6	4.0	4.0	6.1

1. Includes only persons with employment income in 2005.
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census.

Immigrants as victims of violent crime[3]

Similar to what was observed in 1999 (Statistics Canada, 2001), immigrants in 2004 had a rate of violent victimization (i.e., sexual assault, robbery and assault—see Text box 2) that was considerably lower than that of the Canadian-born population. There were 68 violent incidents against immigrants per 1,000 population, compared to 116 incidents per 1,000 for non-immigrants.

A larger proportion of the immigrant population is aged 45 and older, while a smaller proportion is single, compared to non-immigrants. Several previous studies have shown that these factors are associated with a lower risk of victimization (Gannon and Mihorean 2005; Mihorean et al. 2001). Even when controlling for the major victimization risk factors,[4] immigrants run roughly 30% less risk than non-immigrants of being a victim of a violent crime.

Second-generation Canadians—individuals who were born in Canada but with at least one parent born abroad—had a victimization rate comparable to third- or higher generation Canadians (125 incidents per 1,000 population compared to 114 incidents per 1,000 population) (see Text box 3 for data on recent immigrants). This same pattern was noted among visible minorities according to whether or not they were born in Canada (Perreault 2008).

Text box 2
Offence types

The 2004 General Social Survey measured the extent of violent victimization with respect to three offence types, based on the *Criminal Code* definitions for these crimes. When an incident involved more than one type of crime, it was classified according to the most serious offence (in the order presented below).

Violent crimes

Sexual assault: Forced sexual activity, attempted forced sexual activity, or unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing or fondling.

Robbery: Theft or attempted theft in which the perpetrator has a weapon or there is violence or the threat of violence against the victim.

Assault: An attack (victim hit, slapped, grabbed, knocked down or beaten), a face-to-face threat of physical harm, or an incident with a weapon present.

The characteristics of violent incidents are similar for immigrants and non-immigrants[5]

Although rates of violent victimization are lower for immigrants than for the Canadian-born population, the characteristics of the crimes they experience are quite similar.

For both the immigrant and Canadian-born populations, males and females had comparable victimization rates. Although, for immigrants and non-immigrants victims alike, it was much more likely for the perpetrator to be male, in about 9 out of 10 incidents. Also, the perpetrator had acted alone in 3 out of 4 cases. For both immigrants and non-immigrants, the accused was unknown to the victim in slightly less than half of cases.

About 1 in 5 incidents (22%) took place in the victim's home or in another private residence, and 69% of incidents occurred on the street or in a commercial establishment. Also, for both immigrant and non-immigrant victims, the incident resulted in injuries in 27% of cases.

Finally, about one third (32%) of violent incidents against immigrants and non-immigrants were reported to the police. In about 6 in 10 (59%) cases, it was the victim who alerted the police. The only aspect for which immigrant victims of violent crime stood out from the Canadian-born population was their lack of satisfaction with the police response; only 38% of immigrant victims were satisfied, compared to 64% of non-immigrant victims.

Text box 3
Recent immigrants and victimization

The number of recent immigrants who were victims of violent crime was too small in 2004 to produce reliable estimates. To have an estimate of the extent of victimization, the rate of victimization was calculated for total crimes against the person, which also includes theft of personal property. The results show that despite sometimes difficult situations (high unemployment, high incidence of low income), the victimization rate for recent immigrants is similar[1] (121 incidents per 1,000 population) to that for immigrants who lived in Canada at least 5 years (147 per 1,000) and is much lower than for non-immigrants (213 per 1,000).

1. The difference was not statistically significant.

Immigrants' perceptions of the criminal justice system

Similar to non-immigrants, immigrants generally feel that the police are doing a good job. However, there were regional differences in the level of satisfaction with the work done by police. On most aspects covered on the GSS (Table 2), immigrants in the Prairies were more satisfied than non-immigrants. By contrast, in Ontario, British Columbia and the Atlantic Provinces, immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to report that the police were doing a good job of supplying the public with information on ways to reduce crime and being approachable and easy to talk to.

Like the Canadian-born population, immigrants who had contact with the police during the 12 months preceding the survey evaluated the work of the police somewhat less favourably, especially with respect to ensuring the safety of citizens (55% felt the police were doing a good job, compared to 63% for those who had not had contact) and treating people fairly (52% compared to 58%, respectively).

Lastly, being a recent immigrant or a longer-term immigrant had little impact on the evaluation of police performance. However, recent immigrants gave more positive assessments than longer-term immigrants of police efforts to enforce the laws (67% felt the police were doing a good job compared to 59%, respectively) and treat people fairly (61% felt the police were doing a good job, compared to 55%, respectively). Otherwise, recent immigrants felt similarly to earlier immigrants regarding the remaining aspects of police performance included on the GSS.

When asked to evaluate the work of the criminal courts, the prison system and the parole system, only a minority of immigrants and non-immigrants felt that these sectors of the criminal justice system were doing a good job. Immigrants were, nevertheless, more likely than non-immigrants to think that the courts were doing a good job of providing justice quickly and helping the victim. Immigrants were also more likely than the Canadian-born population to say that the prison system was doing a good job of helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens.

Immigrants residing in British Columbia were the least likely to say that the courts or correctional services were doing a good job, while their Quebec counterparts generally rated them more favourably.

Table 2
Perceptions of the criminal justice system, population aged 15 and older

	Atlantic		Quebec		Ontario	
	Immigrant	Non-immigrant	Immigrant	Non-immigrant	Immigrant	Non-immigrant
	percentage					
Local police are doing a good job...						
Enforcing the laws	53	58	66	64	60	60
Promptly responding to calls	53	57	56	56	53	52
Being approachable and easy to talk to	69	73	60	62	64*	67
Supplying information to the public on ways to reduce crime	41*	54	51	53	46*	50
Ensuring the safety of citizens	66	64	62	66	62	62
Treating people fairly	57*	65	57*	64	57	59
Criminal courts are doing a good job...						
Providing justice quickly	18	20	26*	16	18*	13
Helping the victim	22	24	29*	21	26*	18
Determining whether the accused is guilty or not	27	32	32	30	26	27
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	41	46	44	45	42*	45
The prison system is doing a good job...						
Supervising and controlling prisoners while in prison	30	36	31*	38	26*	30
Helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens	20	24	31*	23	19*	15
The parole system is doing a good job...						
Releasing offenders who are not likely to commit another crime	19	20	23	23	13	15
Supervising offenders on parole	22	20	20	17	15	13

	Prairies		B.C.		Canada	
	Immigrant	Non-immigrant	Immigrant	Non-immigrant	Immigrant	Non-immigrant
	percentage					
Local police are doing a good job...						
Enforcing the laws	61*	54	54	54	60	59
Promptly responding to calls	50*	44	45	47	52	52
Being approachable and easy to talk to	65	67	58*	68	63*	66
Supplying information to the public on ways to reduce crime	56*	51	42*	52	47*	51
Ensuring the safety of citizens	62*	57	54	55	61	62
Treating people fairly	57	56	53	55	56*	60
Criminal courts are doing a good job...						
Providing justice quickly	19*	13	14*	9	19*	14
Helping the victim	25*	17	19*	15	25*	19
Determining whether the accused is guilty or not	26	25	18*	23	25*	27
Ensuring a fair trial for the accused	42	44	37*	45	41*	45
The prison system is doing a good job...						
Supervising and controlling prisoners while in prison	26	26	20*	28	26*	32
Helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens	22*	14	16*	11	20*	17
The parole system is doing a good job...						
Releasing offenders who are not likely to commit another crime	16	13	12	13	15*	17
Supervising offenders on parole	17*	13	12	10	15	14

* indicates a statistically significant difference ($p<0.05$) from non-immigrants living in the same region
Note: Regional differences: For non-immigrants, a difference between regions for the same category is generally significant when it is at least 3 percentage points. For immigrants, a difference between regions for the same category is generally significant when it is at least 6 percentage points. This excludes immigrants in Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, where these differences must be at least 7 and 10 percentage points, respectively. **Differences from the Canadian average:** For non-immigrants, a difference between a region and the Canadian average for the same category is generally significant when it is at least 2 percentage points. For immigrants, this difference is generally significant when it is at least 5 percentage points. This excludes the Atlantic Provinces, where no difference from the Canadian average is significant.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2004.

Immigrants' perceptions of social disorder and discrimination

Immigrants are no more likely than non-immigrants to be affected by certain problematic social conditions in their neighbourhood

In 2004, GSS respondents were asked to say to what extent certain social situations were a problem in their neighbourhood. These situations included noisy neighbours or loud parties; people hanging around or sleeping on the streets; garbage or litter lying around; vandalism; attacks or harassment because of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; drug use or dealing; public drunkenness; and prostitution.

Even though these situations are more often a problem in urban settings and most immigrants live in urban areas, immigrants were less likely to feel that these situations were a problem in their own neighbourhood. Thus, immigrants living in urban areas were more likely than non-immigrants in the same areas to report that people loitering (76% versus 70% of non-immigrants), garbage or litter lying around (76% versus 71%), vandalism (76% versus 64%), drug use or dealing (73% versus 67%) and public drunkenness (79% versus 74%) were not a problem at all in their neighbourhood.

A larger proportion of immigrants believe they have experienced discrimination

According to the GSS data, a greater proportion of immigrants than non-immigrants reported that they had experienced discrimination. Nearly 1 in 5 immigrants, compared to more than 1 in 10 among the Canadian-born population, reported having had such an experience in the five years preceding the survey. A higher percentage of immigrants had experienced discrimination when applying for a job or promotion (10% of immigrants compared to 7% of non-immigrants), in a store (7% compared to 4%, respectively) or on the street (6% compared to 4%, respectively).

In addition, although what was being measured was discrimination experienced in the past five years, recent immigrants were more likely than more established immigrants to feel that they had experienced discrimination (26% compared to 18%, respectively). More specifically, 16% of recent immigrants stated that they had experienced discrimination when applying for a job or promotion, compared to 9% of longer-term immigrants and 7% of non-immigrants. At the same time, 75% of recent immigrants were in a visible minority (Table 1.a). In 2004, the proportion of visible minorities that felt they had been the victim of discrimination was two times higher than that of the population not belonging to a visible minority group (Perreault, 2008).

Among immigrants who felt they had experienced discrimination in the five years preceding the survey, 70% believed that their ethnic origin, culture or skin colour was one of the reasons. By comparison, 38% of non-immigrants felt that this was one of the reasons.

Immigrants' perceptions regarding their personal safety and fear of crime

Even though immigrants run less risk of being a victim of violent crime, and despite being more likely to feel that there is no social disorder in their neighbourhood, they express slightly higher levels of fear than the Canadian-born population. As a result, 11% of immigrants compared to 8% of non-immigrants, believed that the crime rate was higher in their neighbourhood than elsewhere in Canada. Moreover, about 3 in 10 immigrants felt that crime had increased in their neighbourhood in the past five years, a proportion similar to that of non-immigrants.

When asked whether they felt safe in various specific situations, immigrants were slightly less likely than non-immigrants to feel safe. For example, immigrants felt less safe than Canadian-born individuals when walking alone in their area after dark (82% compared to 85%, respectively), when using public transportation alone after dark (53% compared to 57%, respectively) and when alone in their home in the evening or at night (77% compared to 81%, respectively).

Also, there were some regional variations in these perceptions among immigrants. In Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces, immigrants generally expressed the lowest levels of fear, while in Ontario and British Columbia they reported the highest levels of fear. For example, 63% of immigrants in Quebec and 65% of those in the Atlantic Provinces said they felt safe when using public transportation alone after dark, compared to 52% in Ontario and 50% in British Columbia.

Due to fear of crime, immigrants were more likely to avoid walking alone after dark or using public transportation alone after dark. Of those immigrants who did not engage in these activities or were afraid in these situations, 45% said they would walk alone after dark more often and 37% said they would use public transportation alone after dark more often if they felt safer. By comparison, for the Canadian-born population, the corresponding proportions were 39% and 26%, respectively.

Summary

The 2004 GSS data confirm the 1999 finding that immigrants are less likely than non-immigrants to be victims of violent crime. Otherwise, with the exception of a lower level of satisfaction with police response, the characteristics of the crimes experienced by immigrant and non-immigrant Canadians are generally similar.

Since immigrants come from many places and some have experienced justice systems other than Canada's, the perceptions that they have of the Canadian system are important. The data show that their assessment of it is generally similar to that of non-immigrants. Nevertheless, immigrants generally have somewhat higher levels of fear of crime than non-immigrants.

Methodology

Data sources

General Social Survey on Victimization

In 2004, Statistics Canada conducted the fourth victimization cycle of the General Social Survey (GSS). The previous cycles had been conducted in 1988, 1993 and 1999. The survey is designed to produce estimates of the extent to which persons are the victims of eight types of offences (assault, sexual assault, robbery, theft of personal property, breaking and entering, motor vehicle theft, theft of household property and vandalism); to examine the risk factors associated with victimization; to examine the rates of reporting to the police; and to evaluate the fear of crime and public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

The GSS target population includes all non-institutionalized persons aged 15 and older. In 2004, the GSS sample consisted of 24,000 households in the provinces. Households were selected using random digit dialling, which yielded a response rate of 75%. The use of telephones for sample selection and data collection means that the 2004 GSS sample in the provinces represents only the 96% of the population that has telephone service.

Data limitations

The data that are used in this profile are based on estimates drawn from a sample of the Canadian population, and they are therefore subject to sampling error. The difference between the estimate obtained from a sample and the estimate based on the total population is sampling error.

This profile uses the coefficient of variation (CV) to measure sampling error. Any estimate with a high CV (more than 33.3%) was not published because it was too unreliable.

When we compare estimates to detect significant differences, we test the hypothesis that the difference between two estimates is zero. We construct a 95% confidence interval around this difference, and if the interval contains zero, we conclude that the difference is not significant. However, if the confidence interval does not contain zero, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the two estimates.

Additionally, non-sampling errors may also have been introduced. Non-sampling errors may include a respondent's refusal to report, a respondent's inability to remember or report events accurately, or errors in the coding or processing of the data. Also, people who could not speak English or French well enough to take part in the survey were not included. For these reasons, the data on victimization should be used with caution.

Bibliography

Chui, Tina, Kelly Tran and Hélène Maheux. 2007. *Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 97-557-XIE. Ottawa.

Gannon, Maire and Karen Mihorean. 2005. "Criminal victimization in Canada, 2004." *Juristat*. Vol. 25, no. 7. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-XIE. Ottawa.

Gilmore, Jason. 2008. "The Canadian immigrant labour market in 2006: Analysis by region or country of birth." *Immigrant Labour Force Analysis Series*. No. 2. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 71-606-XWE. Ottawa.

Mihorean, Karen et al. 2001. *A Profile of Criminal Victimization: Results of the 1999 General Social Survey*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-553-XIE. Ottawa.

Perreault, Samuel. 2008. "Visible minorities and victimization." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. No. 15. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033MIE. Ottawa.

Statistics Canada. 2001. "Immigrants in Canada." *Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series*. No. 6. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85F0033MIE. Ottawa.

Endnotes

1. The data are based on persons aged 15 and older.
2. Urban areas include census metropolitan areas (CMA) and census agglomerations (CA). A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100,000 and a CA has an urban core population between 10,000 and 100,000 based on the previous census – Guide to the Labour Force Survey.
3. Unless otherwise indicated, the differences described in this profile are statistically significant. For further information, see the "Methodology" section.
4. To determine the risk of being a victim of violent crime, a logistic regression was performed controlling for age, sex, marital status, number of evening activities and proximity of crime.
5. Incident characteristics do not include incidents of spousal violence. Perpetrator characteristics apply only to incidents in which only one perpetrator was involved.

Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series
Cumulative Index

Following is a cumulative index of Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile Series published to date:

2008

Immigrants and victimization
Hate crime in Canada
Sexual orientation and victimization
Visible minorities and victimization

2007

Seniors as victims of crime
Criminal victimization in the workplace

2006

Canadians' use of crime prevention measures
Victimization and offending in Canada's territories

2001

Aboriginal people in Canada
Canadians with disabilities
Canadians with literacy problems
Canadians with low incomes
Children and youth in Canada
Immigrants in Canada
Religious groups in Canada
Seniors in Canada
Visible minorities in Canada
Women in Canada